The Third Degree

A NARRATIVE OF METROPOLITAN LIFE

By CHARLES KLEIN AND ARTHUR HORNBLOW

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS

"I Don't Know Much About Music, M'm."

SYNOPSIS.

Howard Jeffries, banker's son, under the evil influence of Robert Underwood, a fellow-student at Yale, leads a life of dissipation, marries the daughter of a gambler who died in prison, and is disowned by his father. He tries to get work and fails. A former college chum makes a business proposition to Howard which requires $2,000 cash, and Howard is broke. Robert Underwood, who had been repulsed by Howard's wife, Annie, in his college days, and had once been engaged to Alicia, Howard's stepmother, has apartments at the Astoria, and is apparently in prosperous circumstances. Howard recalls a $250 loan to Underwood that remains unpaid, and decides to ask him for the $2,000 he needs. Underwood, taking advantage of his intimacy with Mrs. Jeffries, Sr., becomes a sort of social highwayman. Discovering his true character she denies him the house.

CHAPTER IV.

The richly decorated reception rooms, brilliantly illuminated with soft incandescent lights artistically arranged behind banks of flowers, were filled with people. In the air was the familiar buzz always present in a room where each person is trying to speak at the same time. On all sides one heard fragments of inept conversation.

"So good of you to come! How well you're looking, my dear."

"My husband? Oh, he's at the club, playing poker, as usual. He hates music."

"I've such a terrible cold!"

"Trouble with servants? I should say so. I bounced my cook this morning."

"Aren't these affairs awfully tiresome?"

"I was so glad to come. I always enjoy your musicales."

"Dr. Bernstein coming? How perfectly delightful. I'll ask him for his autograph."

"What's psychology?"

"Something to do with religion, I think."

"Haven't we been having dreadful weather?"

"I saw you at the opera."

"Doesn't she look sweet?"

"Oh, I think it's just lovely."

People now arrived in quick succession and, forming little groups, the room soon presented an animated scene. The women in their smart gowns and the men in their black coats made a pleasing picture.

"My dear Mrs. Jeffries, how do you do this evening?" exclaimed a rich, deep voice.

The hostess turned to greet an elderly and distinguished-looking man who had just entered. Directly he came in voices were hushed, and on every side one heard the whisper:

"There's Judge Brewster, the famous lawyer."

There was a general craning of necks to catch a glimpse of the eminent jurist whose brilliant address to the jury in a recent cause celebre had saved an innocent man from the electric chair.

Richard Brewster was a fine example of the old school statesman-lawyer of the Henry Clay type. He belonged to that small class of public men who are independent of all coteries, whose only ambition is to serve their country well, who know no other duty than that dictated by their oath and conscience. A brilliant and forceful orator, there was no office in the gift of the nation that might not have been his for the asking, but he had no taste for politics. After serving with honor for some years on the bench he retired into private practice, and thereafter his name became one to conjure with in the law courts. By sheer power of his matchless oratory and unanswerable logic he won case after case for his clients and it is a tribute to his name to record the plain fact that in all his career he never championed a cause of which he need be ashamed. Powerful financial interests had attempted to secure his services by offers of princely retainers, but without success. He fought the trusts bitterly every time he found them oppressing his profession.

Alicia advanced with extended hand.

"This is indeed kind, judge," she exclaimed with a gracious smile. "I hardly dared hope that my poor musicale would be so honored."

The old lawyer smiled good-humoredly as he replied gallantly:

"I don't know much about music, m'm; I came to see you." Looking around he added: "You've got a nice place here."

He spoke in his characteristic manner—short, nervous, explosive sentences, which had often terrified his opponents in court.

"Lawyers are such flatterers," laughed Alicia as she nervously fanned herself, and looked around to see if her guests were watching.

"Lawyers only flatter when they want to," interrupted Mr. Jeffries, who had just joined the group.

Alicia turned to greet a new arrival and the lawyer continued chatting with his host.

"I suppose you'll take a rest now, after your splendid victory," said the banker.

Judge Brewster shook his head dubiously.

"No, sir, we lawyers never rest. We can't. No sooner is one case disposed of than another crops up to claim our attention. The trouble with this country is that we have too much law. If I were to be guilty of an epigram I would say that the country has so much law that it is practically lawless."

"So you're preparing another case, eh?" said Mr. Jeffries, interested. "What is it—a secret?"

"Oh, no!" answered the lawyer, "the newspapers will be full of it in a day or two. We are going to bring suit against the city. It's really a test case that should interest every citizen; a protest against the high-handed actions of the police."

The banker elevated his eyebrows.

"Indeed," he exclaimed. "What have the police been doing now?"

The lawyer looked at his client in surprise.

"Why, my dear sir, you must have seen by the papers what's been going on in our city of late. The papers have been full of it. Police brutality, illegal arrests, assaults in station houses, star-chamber methods that would disgrace the middle ages. A state of affairs exists to-day in the city of New York which is inconceivable. Here we are living in a civilized country, every man's liberty is guaranteed by the constitution, yet citizens, as they walk our streets, are in greater peril than the inhabitants of terror-stricken Russia. Take a police official of Capt. Clinton's type. His only notion of the law is brute force and the night stick. A bully by nature, a man of the coarsest instincts and enormous physical strength, he loves to play the tyrant. In his precinct he poses as a kind of czar and fondly imagines he has the power to administer the law itself. By his brow-beating tactics, intolerable under Anglo-Saxon government, he is turning our police force into a gang of ruffians who have the city terror-stricken. In order to further his political ambitions he stops at nothing. He lets the guilty escape when influence he can't resist is brought to bear, but in order to keep up his record with the department he makes arrests without the slightest justification. To secure convictions he manufactures, with the aid of his detectives, all kinds of perjured evidence. To paraphrase a well-known saying, his motto is: 'Convict—honestly, if you can—but convict.'"

"It is outrageous," said Mr. Jeffries. "No one can approve such methods. Of course, in dealing with the criminal population of a great city, they cannot wear kid gloves, but Capt. Clinton certainly goes too far. What is the specific complaint on which the suit is based?"

"Capt. Clinton," replied the judge, "made the mistake of persecuting a young woman who happened to be the daughter of a wealthy client of mine. One of his detectives arrested her on a charge of shoplifting. The girl, mind you, is of excellent family and irreproachable character. My client and his lawyer tried to show Capt. Clinton that he had made a serious blunder, but he brazened it out, claiming on the stand that the girl was an old offender. Of course, he was forced at last to admit his mistake and the girl went free, but think of the humiliation and mental anguish she underwent! It was simply a repetition of his old tactics. A conviction, no matter at what cost.

"What do you hope to bring about by this suit?"

"Arouse public indignation, and if possible get Capt. Clinton dismissed from the force. His record is none too savory. Charges of graft have been made against him time and time again, but so far nothing has been proved. To-day he is a man of wealth on a comparatively small salary. Do you suppose his money could have come to him honestly?"

In another corner of the salon stood Dr. Bernstein, the celebrated psychologist, the center of an excited crowd of enthusiastic admirers.

Alicia approached a group of chattering women. Each was more elaborately dressed than her neighbor, and loaded down with rare gems. They at once stopped talking as their hostess came up.

"It was so good of you to come!" said Alicia effusively to a fat woman with impossible blonde hair and a rouged face. "I want to introduce Dr. Bernstein to you."

"Oh, I shall be delighted," smiled the blonde. Gushingly she added: "How perfectly exquisite you look to-night, my dear."

"Do you think so?" said Alicia, pleased at the clumsy flattery.

"Your dress is stunning and your tiara simply gorgeous," raved another.

"Your musicales are always so delightful," exclaimed a third.

At that moment Mr. Jeffries caught his wife by the arm and drew her attention to some newcomers. With a laugh she left the group and hurried toward the door. Directly she was out of earshot, the three women began whispering:

"Isn't she terribly overdressed?" exclaimed the blonde. "The cheek of such a parvenue to wear that tiara."

"Her face is all made up, too," said another.

"These affairs of hers are awfully stupid, don't you think so?" piped the third.

"Yes, they bore everybody to death," said the blonde. "She's ambitious and likes to think she is a social leader. I only come here because it amuses me to see what a fool she makes of herself. Fancy a woman of her age marrying a man old enough to be her father. By the by, I don't see her beau here to-night."

"You mean that scamp, Robert Underwood?"

"Isn't it perfectly scandalous, the way he dances after her? I'm surprised Mr. Jeffries allows him to come to the house."

"Maybe there's been a row. Perhaps that explains why he's not here to-night. It's the first time I've known him absent from one of her musicales."

"He's conspicuous by his absence. Do you know what I heard the other day? I was told that Underwood had again been caught cheating at cards and summarily expelled from the club—kicked out, so to speak."

"I'm not at all surprised. I always had my doubts about him. He induced a friend of mine to buy a picture, and got a tremendous price for it on the false representation that it was a genuine Corot. My friend found out afterward that he had been duped. Proceedings were threatened, but Underwood managed to hush the affair by returning part of the money."

In another part of the room a couple were discussing Mr. Jeffries as he stood talking with Judge Brewster.

"Did you notice how Mr. Jeffries has aged recently? He no longer seems the same man."

"No wonder, after all the trouble he's had. Of course you know what a disappointment his son turned out?"

"A scamp, I understand. Married a chorus girl and all that sort of thing."

"Not exactly, but almost as bad. The girl was a waitress or something like that in a restaurant. She's very common; her father died in prison. You can imagine the blow to old Jeffries. He turned the boy adrift and left him to shift for himself."

Alicia approached her husband, who was still talking with Judge Brewster. She was leaning on the arm of a tall, handsome man with a dark Van Dyke beard.

"Who are you discussing with such interest?" she demanded, as she came up with her escort.

"We were talking of Capt. Clinton and his detestable police methods," said the banker.

"Judge," said Alicia, turning to the lawyer, "allow me to introduce Dr. Bernstein. Doctor, this is Judge Brewster."

The stranger bowed low, as he replied courteously:

"The fame of Judge Brewster has spread to every state in the union."

A faint smile spread over the face of the famous lawyer as he extended his hand:

"I've often heard of you, too, doctor. I've been reading with great interest your book, 'Experimental Psychology.' Do you know," he went on earnestly, "there's a lot in that. We have still much to learn in that direction."

"I think," said Dr. Bernstein, quietly, "that we're only on the threshold of wonderful discoveries."

Pleased to find that her two distinguished guests were congenial, Alicia left them to themselves and joined her other guests.

"Yes," said the lawyer musingly, "man has studied for centuries the mechanism of the body, but he has neglected entirely the mechanism of the mind."

Dr. Bernstein smiled approvingly.

"We are just waking up," he replied quickly. "People are beginning to look upon psychology seriously. Up to comparatively recently the layman has regarded psychology as the domain of the philosopher and the dreamer. It did not seem possible that it could ever be applied to our practical everyday life, but of late we have made remarkable strides. Although it is a comparatively new science, you will probably be astonished to learn that there are to-day in the United States 50 psychological laboratories. That is to say, workshops fully equipped with every device known for the probing of the human brain. In my laboratory in California alone I have as many as twenty rooms hung with electric wires and equipped with all the necessary instruments—chronoscopes, kymograph, tachistoscopes and ergographs — instruments which enable us to measure and record the human brain as accurately as the Bertillon system."

"Really, you astonish me!" exclaimed the judge. "This is most interesting. Think of laboratories solely devoted to delving into mysteries of the human brain! It is wonderful!"

He was silent for a moment, then he said:

"It is quite plain, I think, that psychology can prove most useful in medicine. It is, I take it, the very foundation of mental healing, but what else would it do for humanity? For instance, can it help me, the lawyer?"

Dr. Bernstein smiled.

"You gentlemen of the law have always scoffed at the very suggestion of bringing psychology to your aid, but just think, sir, how enormously it might aid you in cross-examining a witness. You can tell with almost scientific accuracy if the witness is telling lies or the truth, and the same would be clear to the judge and the jury. Just think how your powers would be increased if by your skill in psychological observation you could convince the jury that your client, who was about to be convicted on circumstantial evidence alone, was really innocent of the crime of which he was charged. Why, sir, the road which psychology opens up to the lawyer is well-nigh boundless. Don't you use the Bertillon system to measure the body? Don't you rely on thumb prints to identify the hand? How do you know that we psychologists are not able to-day to test the individual differences of men?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

To the Man of Honor.

Knee gains are the same as losses.—Hesiod.

JUST THE WAY.

She—Where has your papa been all morning?

He—Developing a couple of negatives with an instantaneous developer.

Symptoms Were There.

"You husband might have a little solid food directly he begins to mend," said the doctor. "But how am I to tell?" inquired the anxious wife.

"The convalescent stages of influenza," replied the doctor, "are marked by a slight irritability."

The next day he called and found the patient's wife radiant. "When I refused to order his steak and onions," she explained, "he came into the kitchen and smashed fourteen soup plates and a dinner service; so, of course, I sent out for steak at once."—Stray Stories.

Triumph of Courage.

Courage and the "power of the human eye," saved Walter Sargent, a prosperous rancher, in the Redwood district, San Jose, when he was confronted by a hungry mountain lion the other evening. Sargent was driving a herd of cows to his home in the foothills when he noticed the big cat stalking him. As it crouched for a spring Sargent turned and fixed the beast with his eye. Man and lion remained as immovable as statues for a few seconds and then the animal turned and trotted away.

Some men are as easily rattled as others are hard to shake.

To do two things at once is to do neither.—Publius Syrus.

Whatever you lose, you should reckon of no account.—Publius Syrus.

Country's Oldest Weaver.

Mrs. Melissa Hodgdon, aged seventy-five years, who runs four looms in the weaving department of the York Manufacturing company, at Saco Me., and claims the distinction of being the oldest weaver in the United States, began work in this plant 55 years ago the middle of this month

The errors of a great mind are more edifying than the truths of a little.—Borne.